

From: Greg Smethells
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Microsoft is a monopoly. This has come about because Microsoft does not play fair when it comes to interfaces that allow interaction with their software or by-products of their software. A major component of this, in the simplest form, is file formats. The major problem different operating systems have when interacting with Microsoft's OS is that their competing applications do not properly handle the file formats that are prevalent everywhere due to the Microsoft monopoly.

A remedy would be to enforce all Microsoft file formats to have open specifications that must be correct for periods of time (no lying in the specification). Any changes to the specification would need to be broadcast so that others had time to react. No hurt to Microsoft can come from that aside from better competition. A better solution would be to open-source the code that implements utilization of the file formats in all manner of ways.

It would also be wise to enforce that writing programs to these specifications work in almost all cases before assuming that indeed the code and specifications for important protocols is truly opened up. The best solution would be to enforce the openness through a standards committee run by third-party individuals from academia who have no ties to Microsoft, Sun, or Linux companies (Red Hat, etc).

Only when the Microsoft monopoly file format's, protocol's, and interface's specifications are open-sourced, correct, and unchangeable for extended periods, can we assume that others will be able to compete.

Greg

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